



THE BEST OF TIMES



ISSUE 181 DIGITAL EDITION
SPAWN.COM

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IMAGE COMICS PRESENT

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Previously in Spawn:

Al Simmons was a hit man for the US government until his C.O. Jason Wynn, betrayed him and a mysterious assassin ended Al's life. At the moment of death, Al was offered a deal by the demon Malebolgia and returned to Earth as Spawn, a creature with supernatural powers born in Hell.

As Armageddon consumed the world, Spawn turned against his masters, destroying all life on Earth. While God and Satan continue their endless conflict in a parallel universe, Spawn has re-created the world and resurrected the human race in what has become known as the White Light. The portals to Heaven and Hell are closed, leaving humanity free from the influence of angels and demons. Or so he believed...

After a reunion with his brother, Richard, Al's long-buried memories are beginning to resurface. It seems that the mysterious Mammon has been manipulating Al Simmons since he was a child. When he returns to his parents' home, Al's father tells him that Mammon's influence stretches back even further. He gives Al the journal of his great grandfather, Henry Simmons, a journal that carries a dire warning for future generations. The Simmons bloodline tainted and Al's mother has been in league with Mammon, the man she knew as Malefick, since before his birth, marrying Al's father for the sole purpose of breeding this generation's Hellspawn.

As Mammon draws the threads of his plot together, Spawn has returned with the Wiccan, Nyx to his retreat in the Alleys. Here he is attacked by a Vrykolakas, ancient precursor of the Vampire. The creature has been sent by the mysterious cloaked companion of Mammon. When the creature bites Spawn, it infects him with a fever that splits him in two. Inside his tortured mind, Al battles with his own costume and loses. Now, with the symbiotic costume dominant, Spawn has a new purpose – to finally lay his humanity to rest by killing Wanda.

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SPAWN CREATED BY
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DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF:
MICHAEL TURNER



I HAVE
TO, BECAUSE
IT'S TELLING
ME--

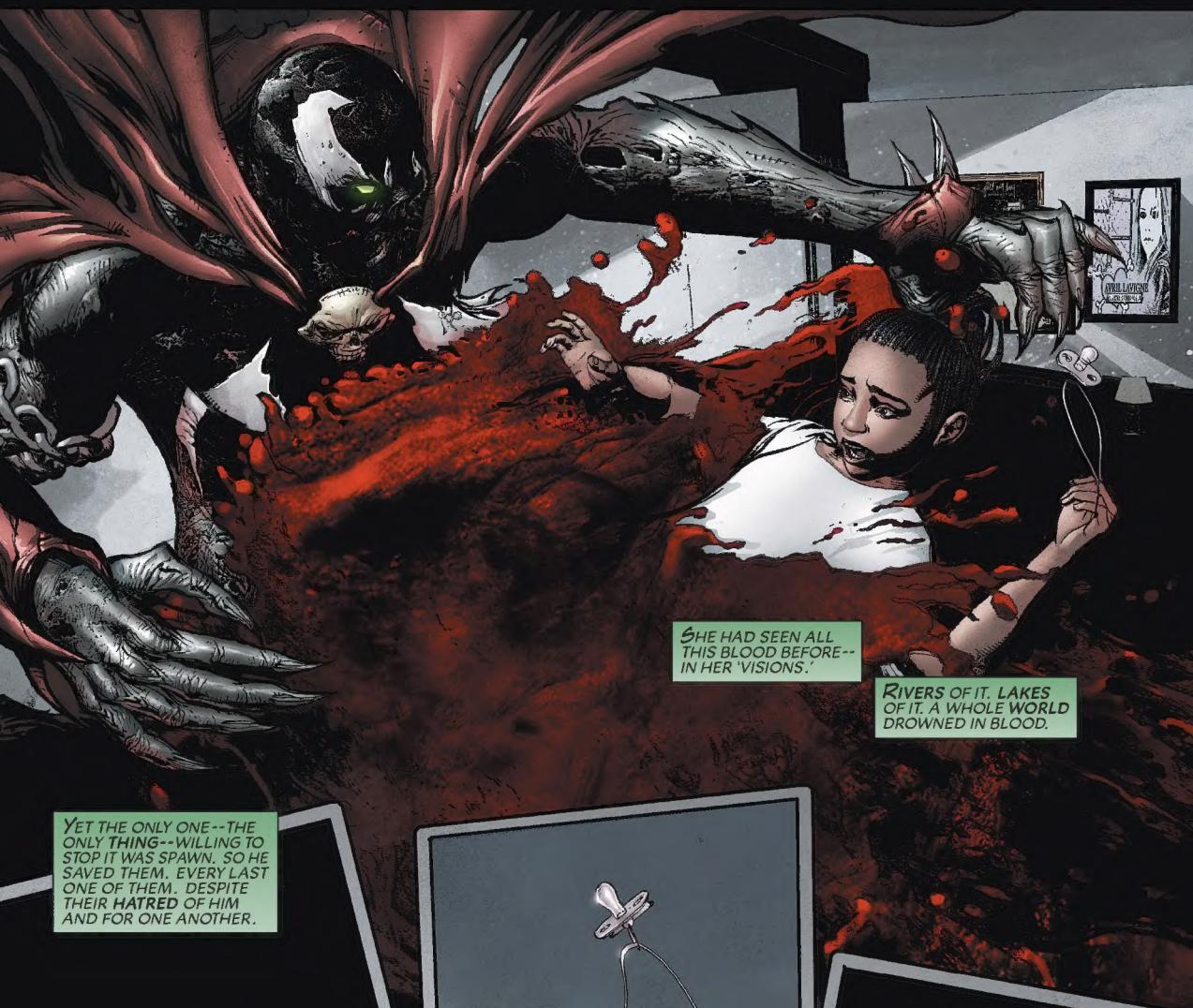
why?

WHY DO
YOU HAVE
TO KILL MY
MOM--?

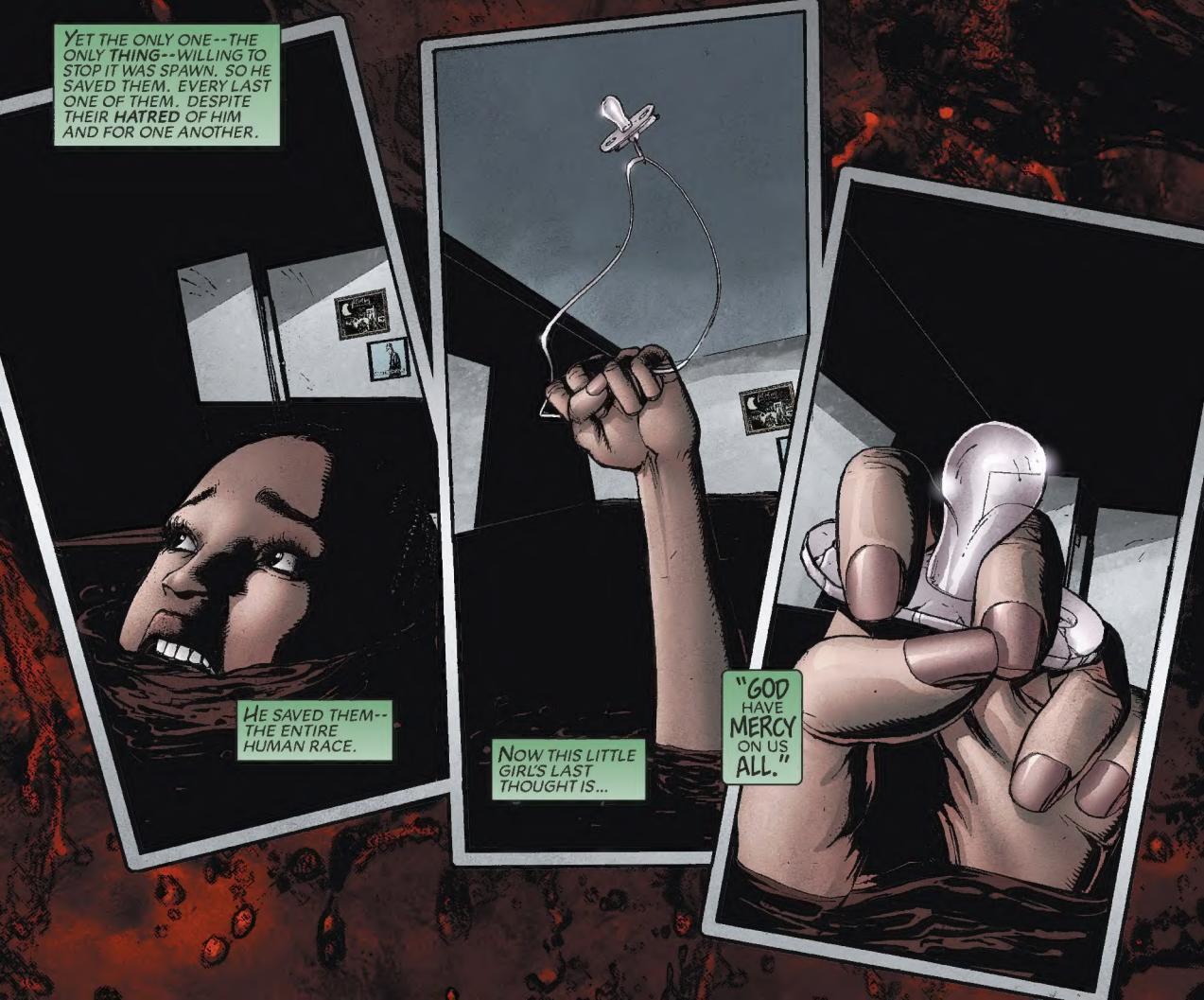
CAN'T YOU
HEAR
IT?!

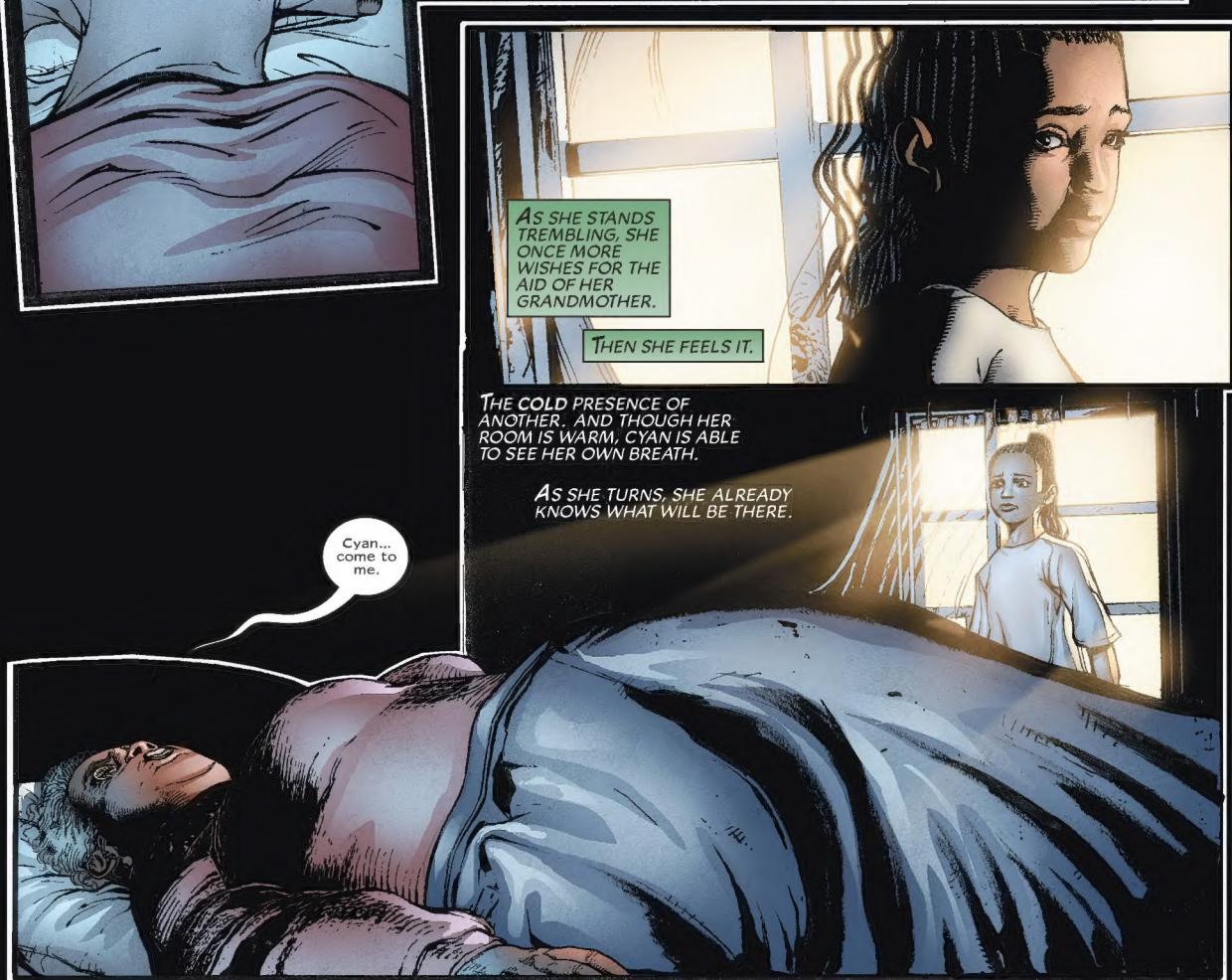
HEAR
WHAT?

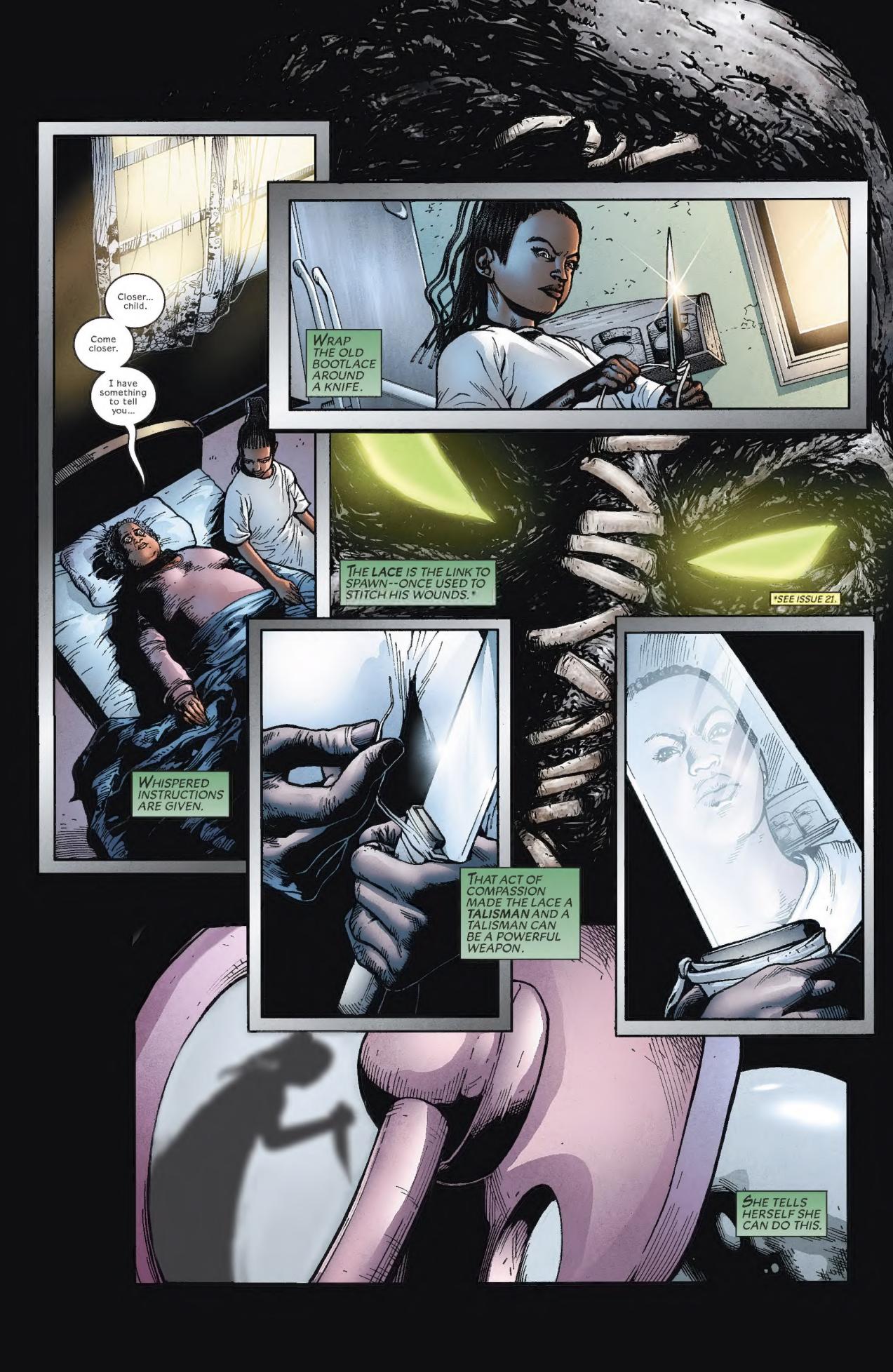
THIS!



YET THE ONLY ONE--THE ONLY THING--WILLING TO STOP IT WAS SPAWN. SO HE SAVED THEM. EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM. DESPITE THEIR HATRED OF HIM AND FOR ONE ANOTHER.







Closer... child.

Come closer.

I have something to tell you...

WRAP THE OLD BOOTLACE AROUND A KNIFE.

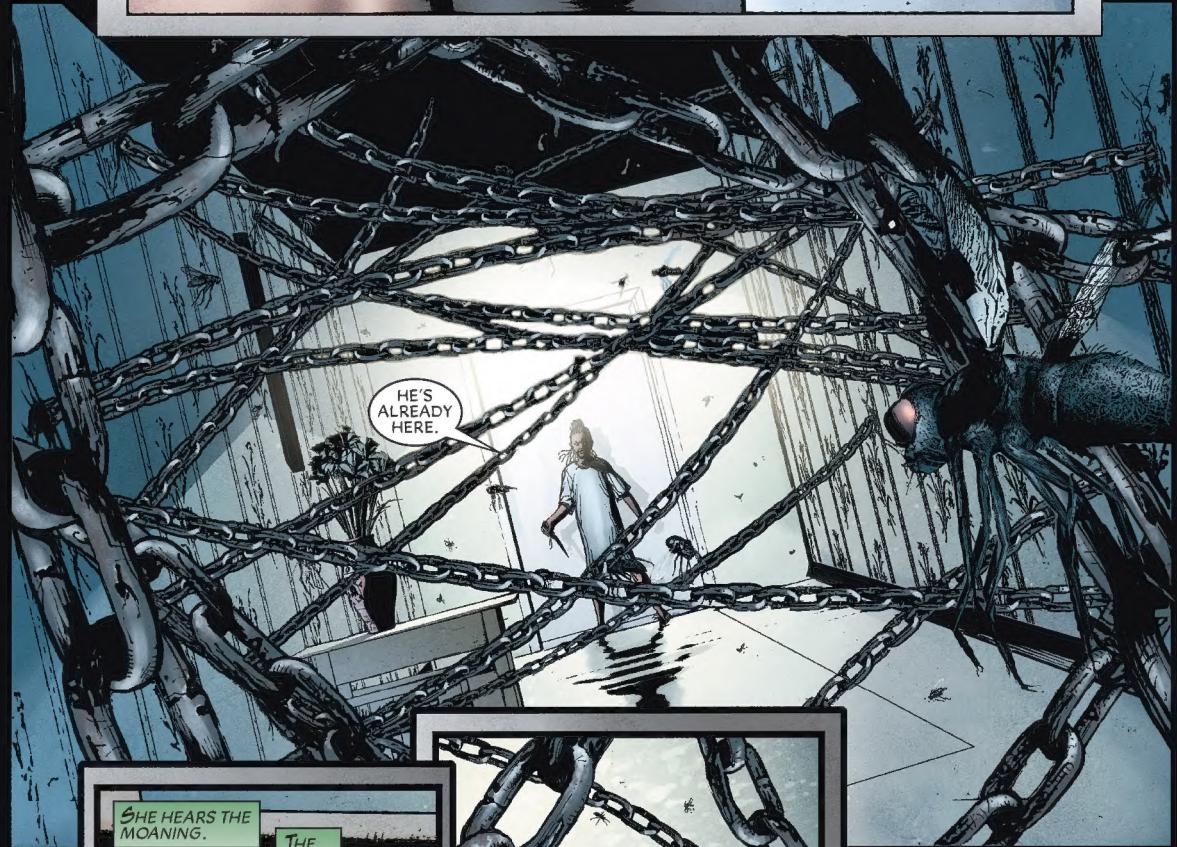
THE LACE IS THE LINK TO SPAWN--ONCE USED TO STITCH HIS WOUNDS."

*SEE ISSUE 21.

WHISPERED INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN.

THAT ACT OF COMPASSION MADE THE LACE A TALISMAN AND A TALISMAN CAN BE A POWERFUL WEAPON.

SHE TELLS HERSELF SHE CAN DO THIS.





oh
my
god.

THAT WAS--
UNBELIEVABLE.



I SWEAR
YOU'RE GOING
TO GIVE ME A
HEART ATTACK
ONE TIME.

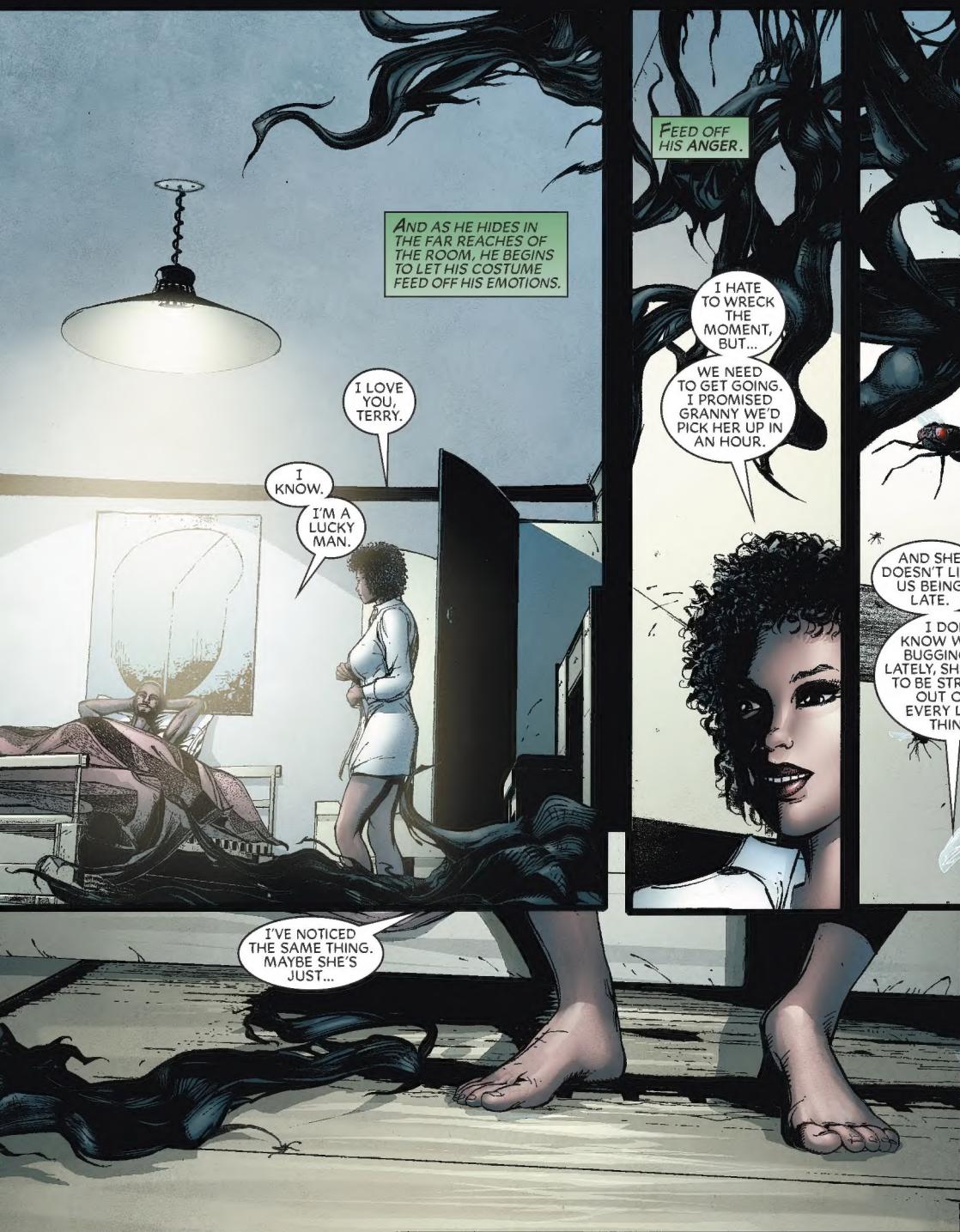


HE CANNOT MOVE.

HAVING BEEN
IN THE ROOM
FOR ALL OF IT.
A WITNESS TO
EVERY MOVE
HER BODY AND
MOUTH WERE
MAKING.



WE'D THOUGHT THOSE
INTENSE CRIES OF PLEASURE
WERE ONLY FOR HIM.



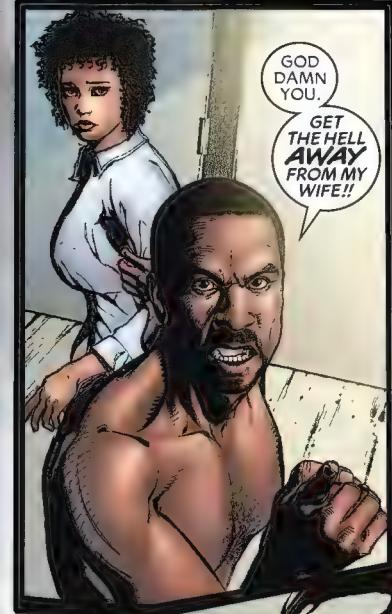




...FILLING ITS
NEED TO TOUCH
HATRED.

IN RETURN THE LIVING
TISSUE FEEDS SPAWN
WITH MYRIAD DIZZYING
THOUGHTS AND IMAGES.

YOU'RE
NOTHING BUT A
WHORE!











THIS PLACE.
DO YOU
REMEMBER
IT?

HE
BROUGHT
ME HERE
ONCE.

HE RENTED
A SMALL BOAT.
TOOK US OUT TO
THE MIDDLE OF
THE LAKE.



THEN HE...

HE
ASKED
ME TO
MARRY
HIM.

SHE REMEMBERS THAT DAY WITH PERFECT CLARITY. THE LAKE WAS LIKE A MIRROR, THE SUN WARM ON HER FACE, NEARBY THEY COULD HEAR THE SOUND OF CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER.

THOUGH NOW, IT'S THE SAME PLACE SEEN THROUGH A MADMAN'S EYES.

THAT
REALLY WAS THE
BEST OF OUR
TIMES.

NOW WHAT?
YOU'RE GOING TO
KILL ME?

I DON'T HAVE A
CHOICE. I NEED TO BE
FREE OF YOU.

FREE...!
FROM
ME??
WHAT
ABOUT ME
BEING FREE
OF YOU!

ALL I DID WAS
TRY TO CARRY ON--TO
TRY AND GET PAST THE PAIN
OF MY HUSBAND'S DEATH.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT
THAT'S LIKE...?

TO HAVE
SOMEONE
LEAVE YOU AND
BREAK YOUR
HEART AT THE
SAME TIME?

YOU WANT
TO BE FREE OF
ME? THEN
FORGET ME,
FORGET I EVER
EXISTED!

I
CAN'T.
I'VE
ALREADY
TRIED. I KEEP
COMING BACK
TO WHAT I DID
TO YOU.
TO US.

AND
KILLING ME
RIDS YOU
OF THAT
GUILT?

NO.

KILLING YOU
STOPS ME FROM
THINKING I WAS
EVER HUMAN TO
BEGIN WITH.

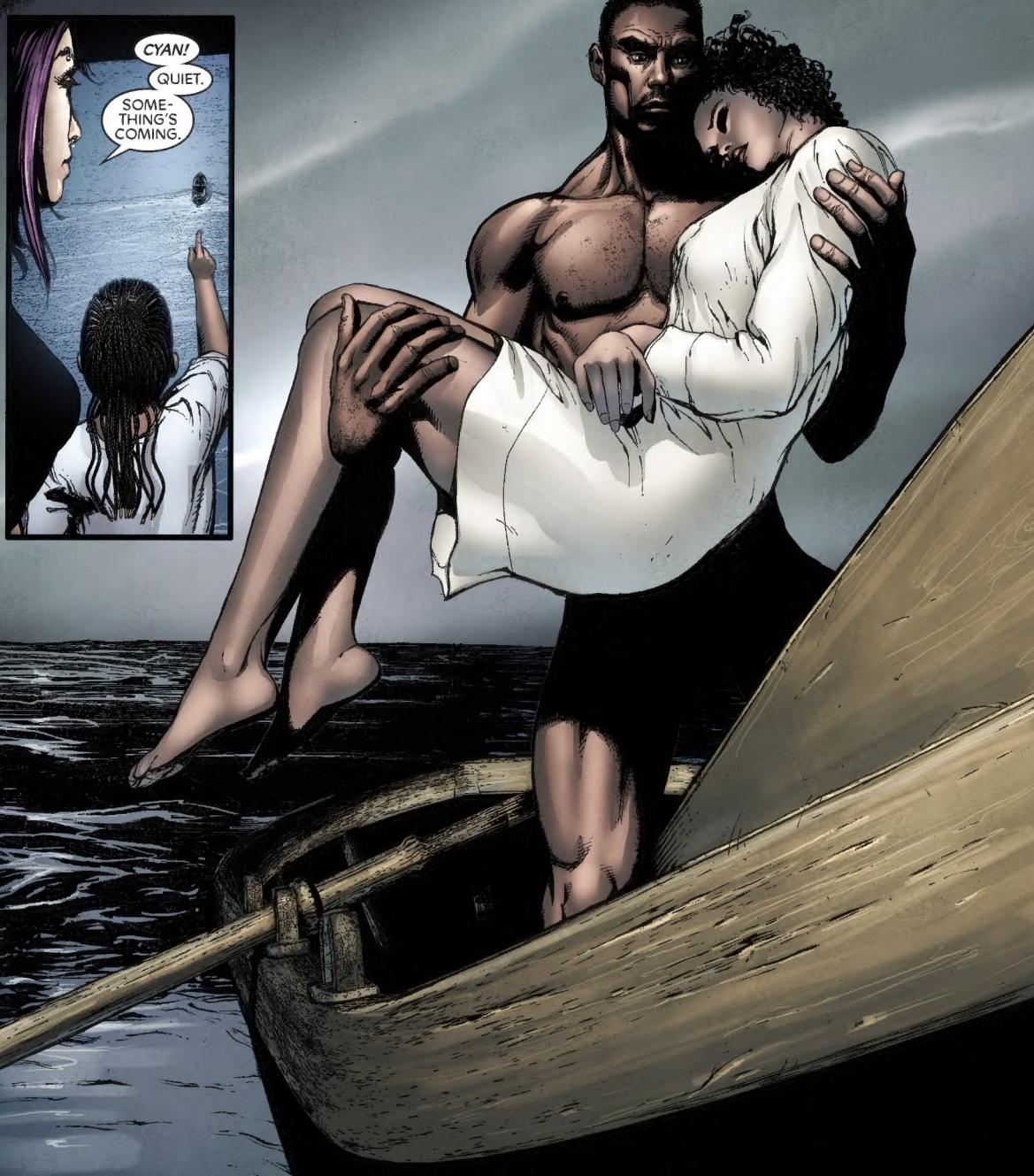




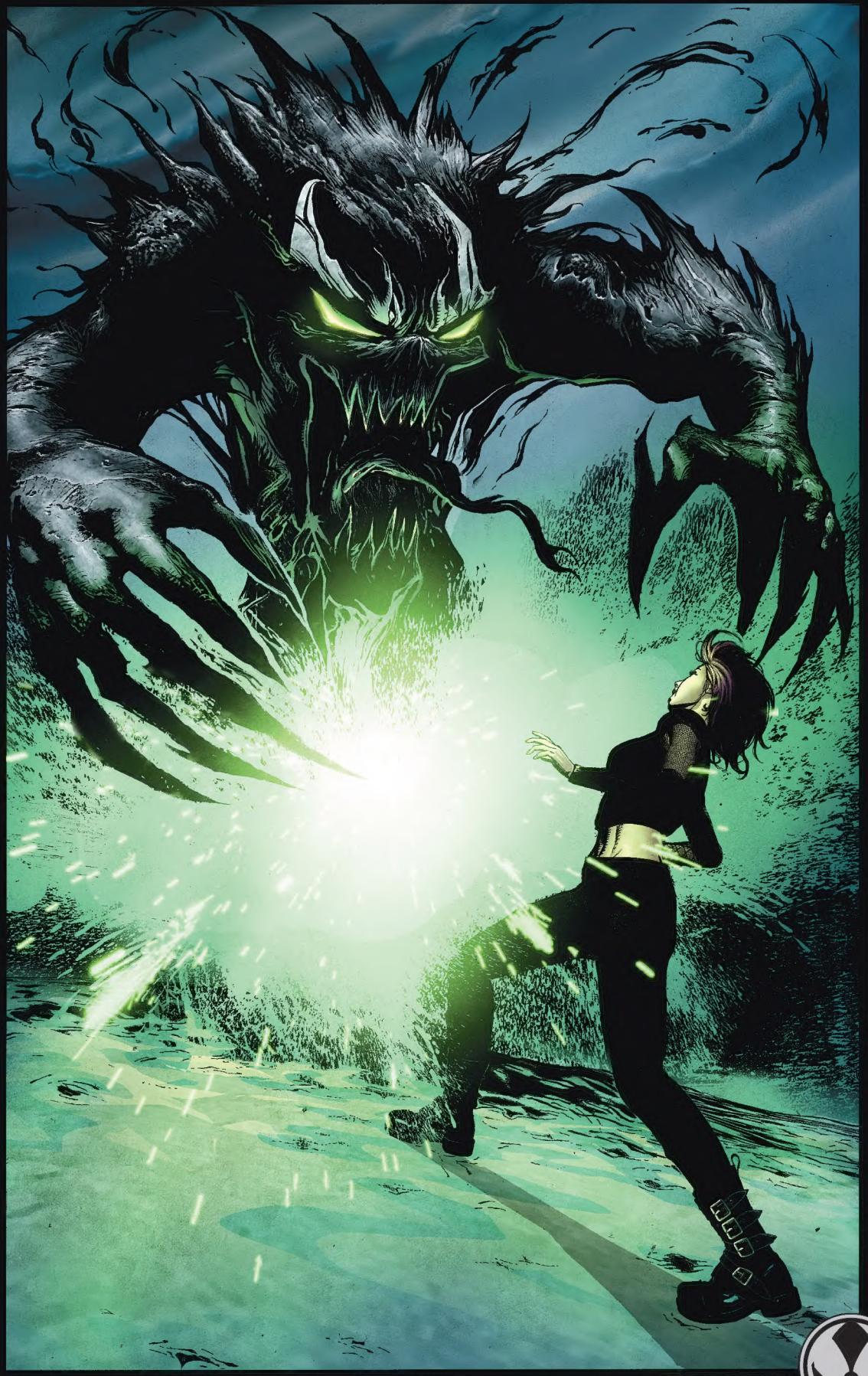


PLEASE.

FORGIVE
ME!







TO BE CONTINUED





EMPIRE